

A
S V M M E R
S E R M O N

V P O N
ELIAHS PRAYER.

Preached in the *Cathedrall Church* of
St. Pauls in LONDON, on the last Sonday of
Trinity Terme in the afternoone, being a time
of extraordinary heat and drought.

By John Gore, Rector of Wenden-
lofts in Essex.



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the Signe of the Greene-Dragon. 1638,



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TO
THE RIGHT
WORSHIPPFULL, M^r.

WILLIAM BIRD, Doctor of the Ci-
vill Law, my most Worthy Friend
and Benefactor.

RIGHT WORSHIP.



When I consider the manifold fa-
vours and courtesies that I have
found at your hands, I am ready
to say unto my selfe, as Ruth said
once to Boaz, Ruth 2. 10. Qua-
re inveni gratiam? Why have I found grace
in your eyes, that you should take knowledge of me,
seeing I am a stranger? For mine owne part I
can impute it to nothing, but unto Gods goodnesse,
and your owne worthinesse: And my onely ambi-
tion is to make you this acknowledgement that the

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

world may see, though I am poore, I am thankfull.
Now as Ioab wisht to David in another case, 2
Sam. 24. 3. so wish I to you, The Lord God adde
unto your estate, how much soever it be, an hundred
fold, and that your eyes may see it, and your heart
may rejoyce in it all the dayes of your life.

Thus prayes

Your poore unworthy

Friend,

JOHN GORE.



A
SUMMER
SERMON.

JAMES 5. 17, 18.

Elias was a man subject to like passions as wee are, and hee prayed earnestly that it might not raine, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three yeares and sixe moneths. And hee prayed againe, and the heavens gave raine, and the earth brought forth her fruit.



He summe and drift of this Text is to set forth the efficacie, or rather omnipotency of earnest and fervent Prayer. There be two graces of God in man, that may justly be termed Omnipotent or Almighty graces; God himselfe being pleased to shew his Almighty power and

and goodnesse in them, and they are Faith and Prayer. 1. For the first, *Mat. 15. 28.* *O woman great is thy faith, bee it unto thee even as thou wilt.* What a large unlimited Grant and Patent was this for a poore sinner to aske what she would, and have promise of acceptance. *Mark. 9. 23.* *To him that beleeueth all things are possible.* Looke what a beleever cannot doe himselfe, God himselfe will doe it for him, and yet it shal be accounted as his act and deed. *Phil. 4. 13.* *I can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth me :* Not meaning that hee could doe all things in generall and at large, as to walke on the waters, flye in the ayre, &c. but all things that belonged to his calling, all things that concerned his Ministry, and all things that pertained to the right way of pleasing God and of saving his owne soule: He could pray well, Preach well, live well; he could want and he could abound, he could conforme and apply himselfe to all estates whatsoever: All this hee could doe, not by any power or ability of his owne, but by the strengthening grace, and faith, and vertue of Iesus Christ, (*I can doe all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*) As on the contrary, our Saviour saith of himselfe, *Mark. 6. 5.* that he could doe nothing worth speaking of in his owne Country, *ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ, no mighty worke, no worke of wonder* (in respect of what he could have done) *only because of their unbeliefe :* and marke, that it is not said, *He would do no such workes there,* but *ἐν ἧν ἔμελλεν, He could not doe them :* not that Christ was unable for want of power, but hee saw it was unavaileable through their lacke of faith. For the power of God,
and

and the faith of men, are like the spirits and the sinewes in the body, the one mooves, and stirres, and workes within the other; if there be no faith in us, there can be no expectation of any power or any helpe from God.

2. The other omnipotent grace is *Prayer*; and that you may be assured it is so, marke but that expression, *Exod. 32. 10. Let me alone* (saith God to *Moses*) *that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great Nation*. What a word was this to come from the mouth of Almighty God, to bid a poore weake creature, *let him alone*: it shewes that *Moses* by his prayer did even (as it were) *over-power* the Lord, that the Lord had not the power to revenge himselfe on that provoking people, as long as *Moses* interceded for them.

Such a powerfull man with God was *Elijah* here in my text: His mouth (as a Father saith) was *Frenum Cæli*, the very bridle of Heaven; he could even rule the heavens with his prayers, as a man rules a horse with a bridle: Now least you should thinke he did thus prevaile with God, rather by the privilege of his person, than by the vertue of his prayers, The Apostle tells us for that, he was *ὁμοιωμένος*, *he was a man subject to the same passions that we are*, and yet his prayer tooke such good effect. (*Elijah was a man subject, &c.*)

In my text there are two generall points to be considered. 1. The condition and quality of *Elijahs* person, [*He was a man subject to like passions as we are*] 2. The condition and quality of his prayer; that like a two-edged sword, it cut both wayes, and prevail.

prevailed in both kindes; both to bring a judgement, and to bring a blessing upon the people. His first prayer like a burning feaver entred into the bowels of the earth, and scorcht and dried up the Rivers and Lakes, and Springs, and left no moisture in them; and so brought a judgement of drought and dearth upon the land. His second prayer went up into the clouds above, and fetcht an ὁμοιοπαθὴς αἰθρῶν a *heaven-dropping dew*, a happy and a heavenly raine that moystned and fatned, and refreshed the earth againe [*He prayed againe, and the heavens gave raine, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*]

1. The condition and quality of *Eliahs* person, what manner of man *Eliah* was? My Text saith hee was ὁμοιοπαθὴς, *A man subject to the same passions*, to the same frailties and infirmities *that we are*. Hence you may observe, that no profession of holinesse, no practise of piety, no degree of grace and sanctification in this life, can exempt, or free, or priviledge a man from common passions, and infirmities, *Eliah* was a man of God, a mortified and a sanctified man, and one of the greatest favourites in the Court of heaven, and yet a man subject to passions. What shall I neede to multiply examples to proove this point, when wee know the Apostle affirmeth even of our Saviour himselve, *That hee was in all things like unto us sinne onely excepted*: set but sinne aside (whereof his blessed person was incapable, for as no rust can take hold of burning and flaming iron; no more could any sin or corruption take hold of his pure and precious soule) set but that aside, and our Saviour Christ was (as *Eliah* is said to be) ὁμοιοπαθὴς αἰ

man

man subject to the very same infirmities and passions, of anger, and feare, and sorrow, and sadnesse, that wee are: and happy was it for us that so he was; for by this meanes he became (as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 2. 17.* *A mercifull High-Priest,*) one that knew how to tender and succour our infirmities, because himselfe had a feeling of them in his owne nature. This made him so tenderly affected towards the hungry multitude, *Mat. 15.* because himselfe knew by his owne experience what an unsufferable misery hunger was. This made him so compassionate towards the sorrowes of *Mary and Martha, Iohn 11.* because himselfe was *Vir dolorum*, a man acquainted with griefe and sorrow: And such was his compassion toward *Peter* in that state of desertion wherein he lay, *Luke 22.* because himselfe knew and felt in his owne soule, what a woefull thing it was to be forsaken of God. And this is the assurance which the Apostle gives us, that wee shall obtaine mercy and grace from Iesus Christ, to helpe and comfort us in time of neede, *Heb. 4. 16.* because himselfe had a feeling of the same infirmities, and was a man subject to the same passions that wee our selves are, sinne onely excepted.

In a word then, as there is no Rose since the Creation, but hath his prickles, as well as his sweete leaves; so there is no man living since the fall of *Adam*, (except our Saviour forementioned, who was *Dei uerbum & Deus* and man both) but hath his passions as well as his perfections, his infirmities as well as his graces. As *Cyrl* observes, there is no Rocke of stone so hard, but hath some crackes, some clefts

and seames in it, whereat weedes spring out and grow: so there is no mans heart so sanctified and filled with grace, but hath some crackes, some flaws in it, whereat his finnes and corruptions sprout and issue out, to his no small regret and greife. And as we see by experience, that there is chaffe about every corne in the field, and bitternesse in every branch of Wormewood, and saltnesse in every drop of water in the Sea: so is there infirmity and frailty, corruption and passion in every man, woman, and child, of what estate, of what degree, of what profession soever. *Eliab was a holy man, a zealous man, a man of God, and yet a man subject to passions.*

Let no man therefore be too forward or too severe in censuring and condemning the follies and frailties, the weakenesses and passions of godly men, or of the men of God, (such as *Eliab* was) for alas, they are *equo iure* subject to the same passions that other men are, *Solomon* tels us, *Pro. 27, 19, That as in water, face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man.* A man that looks into the water, or into a glasse, shall see a face there in all points answering to his owne, the same spots, the same warts, the same wrinkles and blemishes that he sees in the face in the water; they are all the very same in his owne face, there is face answering to face, so doth the heart of man to man; the same evils, the same corruptions, lusts and sins, that thou seest in another mans heart, breaking out into his life, the very selfe-same are in thy owne heart; his heart to thine is but as a face answering to a face in the water. Observe the *Apostles*

apostles demand, 1 Cor. 4. 7. and apply it to thy selfe
 Who makes thee to differ from another man?
 For by nature all are alike, all equally devoid of spi-
 rituall grace and goodnesse, and all equally prone to
 sinne and wickednesse: how comes it to passe then,
 that one man differs from another, that one is holy,
 blamelesse, and undefiled in his way; another li-
 centious and loose, and spotted with the world?
 Answer, It is not any thing in nature (beleewe that
 for a truth) but meerely that samē *Gratia discrimi-*
nans (as Divines call it) that *distinguishing* Grace of
 God, it is that which makes the difference betwixt
 one man and another. Let no man therefore ascribe
 any thing to himselfe for his freedome from great
 offences, but give God the glory of his grace which
 had made him to differ from the greatest sinner, and
 if at any time, thou seest another man breake out
 into passion, or miscarry in his way by some ill
 temptation; reprove him in Gods name; and pray
 for him when thou hast done, and withall, reflect
 upon thy selfe, and say, as Plato did, *Num ego talis*
essiam? Am not I such a one? Have not I beene, or
 may not I be as vile and as vicious as hee? Be not
 therefore too censorious nor too supercilious (as the
 manner of some is) but incline rather to thinke eve-
 ry man better, than to thinke any man worse than
 thy selfe: if thou seest thy brother overtaken in a
 fault, doe then as the Apostle adviseth thee, Gal.
 6. 1. *κατασκήνη* restore him with the spirit of meeknesse,
 or (as the word signifieth) bind him up gently and
 lovingly, as a Chirurgicalian doth a bone that is out of
 joynt; Considering thy selfe (saith hee) least thou
 also

also be tempted; considering (I say) that thou art, as he is, and all men are, as *Eliab* was ^{duo 10 mo dñe}, too like one another in that which is naught, all subject to the same passions; *All* (as the Apostle saith) *shut up under sinne*. And I pray God of his goodnesse have mercy on us all, Amen.

Againe, the consideration of this, if it be rightly conceived, may serve for a comfort and a stay unto such tender consciences as have sinned of infirmity, and like *Moses* in their haste, have spoken unadvisedly with their lips, not being able for the time to over-rule and bridle their passions. It is some comfort to consider, that the greatest Saints of God have sometimes beene of the same temper; yea there is not a soule in heaven (the soule of Iesus Christ onely excepted) but hath beene sometimes subject to the very same passions. *And I said, This is my infirmity* (saith the Psalmist) *Psal. 77. 10. but I remember the yeares of the right hand of the most High. i.* I consider and call to minde that God in former times, and in the dayes of old, hath had compassion upon the same infirmities in other men; and why should I misdoubt (he being still the same compassionate God) but that hee will have pittie and compassion upon the same infirmities in me. But some man may say: How shall I know and be assured that my finnes are finnes of infirmity, such as God will winke at; and not rather finnes of presumption and iniquity, such as his soule abhorres? Answer, A sinne of infirmity may be knowne two wayes.

1. By the antecedent which goes before it; and that

that is an honest resolution of a mans heart against sinne and evill; when a man doth stedfastly resolve (by the assistance and grace of God) to separate himselfe from every knowne sinne, and to sanctifie himselfe in all holy duty and obedience to God, striving by a holy desire and an hearty endeavour, in nothing willingly to sinne against God, but in every thing to please him and approve himselfe unto him: if such a man chance to fall by occasion into a fault, or be overtaken unawares (as the Apostle speaks, *Gal. 6. 1.*) besides the purpose of his heart, and the intention and desire of his soule: that mans finnes, are finnes of infirmity, which by the mercy of God shall never be laid to his charge. Contrarily, when a man shall hang *in equilibrio*, in an even ballance (as it were) betwixt wickednesse and goodnesse, and shall be equally disposed to sinne or not to sinne as occasion shall offer it selfe; or which is worse, shall doe like him, *Psal. 36. 4.* shall set, and settle himselfe in a way that is not good, resolving with himselfe, that this sinne fits my turne, and pleaseth my humour, and I will not part with it: or which is worst of all, when a man shall *draw iniquity with cords of vanity* (as the Prophet speaketh) as if the devill were backward, and sinne would not come fast enough upon him of its owne accord; shall fish and angle for it, and hunt after ill company, and draw himselfe and others into sinne, as Fish and Fowles are drawne into a net, to their ruine and destruction; this mans finnes are farre beyond the sinne of infirmity, for they are finnes of iniquity, and finnes of obstinacy, and such as will cost him

many a sigh, many a groane, many a teare, before e-
ver he shall attaine to this comfortable perswasion,
that there is compassion with God, and salvation
with Christ for his soule.

2. A sinne of infirmity is knowne by the conse-
quents of it, or that which followes after it: it leaves
such a sting behind it in the soule, that a man can
never be at quiet in his owne conscience, till he hath
made his peace with God by a sound and serious
humiliation, and reconciled himselfe againe to Ie-
sus Christ. Yea, it never leaves a man, till it hath
brought him to that same *ἀγανάκτησις*, that *Indigna-
tion* which the Apostle speakes of, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* that
a man shall even fret and vex and fall out with him-
selfe for offending and provoking so good, so graci-
ous a God. It will make a man upbraid himselfe for
a very beast and a foole (as *David* did, *Psal. 73.*) So
ignorant was I, and so foolish, even as a beast before thee.
And it is a sure rule, that of *Saint Augustine*; *Pecca-
ta non nocent, si non placent*; if a mans finnes doe not
please him, they will never hurt him. Whereas on the
contrary, when a man can carry away his finnes as
lightly as *Sampson* carryed the gates of *Azza*, that
they are no burthen to his soule; or if they doe be-
ginne to trouble him, shall doe as *Saul* did, betake
himselfe to musicke and sport, and merry company
to drive it away (as if one sinne could drive out ano-
ther, and not rather drive it further in:) beleeve
it, this mans finnes are no finnes of infirmity, but
they are finnes of an higher nature, and such as will
cost a man deare ere he can be acquitted of them in
the sight of God. And this I dare confidently as-
firme,

firmē, that there is no man that finnes of infirmity, but he is after ward the better for his sinne; it makes him the more jealous of himselfe, the more watchfull over his wayes, the more carefull to serve and please God, than ever he had beene in former times. Whereupon saith Saint *Austin*, upon those words of the Apostle, *Rom. 8. Omnia cooperantur, &c. All things worke together for good to them that love God. Etiam peccata Domine, Even our very finnes O Lord;* for by sinne wee have experience of our infirmity, our infirmity brings us downe to humility, humility brings us home to God, and in God every man hath his *quietus est*, a happy discharge from all his sins. This being done, one thing onely remaines, and that is this; A man that hath sinned of infirmity, will labour to bring forth that same *καὶ ἔτιον* which *Iohn Baptist* speakes of, *Mat. 3. 8. The worthy fruites of repentance*; for you most know, that repentance is one thing, and the fruit of repentance is another; it is not enough to repent, and be sorry for what a man hath done (so did *Judas*, so did *Ahab*) but he must honestly and unfainedly endeavour to bring forth the fruit of repentance, and that is the reformation and alteration of his life, and conversation in the sight of God and men. If it be thus with thee, take comfort (in Gods name) from this comfortable Doctrine, that thou art no other then *Eliab* was, a man subject to passion.

It followes; *Eliab was a man subject to passions, yet he prayed*; Hence we may learne, never to be so dejected at the view of our frailties and imperfections, as to forbear our resorting to God in prayer.

For

For no man living hath so much neede to pray to God, as a man subject to passions. It was one part of *Solomons* request to God, *2 Chron. 6. 29.* *When any one shall perceive and feele his owne sore, his owne grieffe,* and the Plague of his owne heart (as he termeth a mans owne corruption) what shall hee doe? Shall he despair, shall hee be driven backe from God (as *Jordan* was driven backe at the presence of the *Arke*) no, let him doe this; let him downe upon his knees to God, and spread forth his hands to Heaven, and the Lord which dwelleth in Heaven will heare him, and when he heares, have mercy. It was an amazed and unadvised prayer, that of *Simon* to our Saviour, *Luke 5. 8.* when hee cryed out, *Lord goe from me, for I am a sinfull man;* as if a Patient should say to the Physitian, depart from mee, for I am sicke. The sicker a man is, the more neede he hath of the Physitians presence; and the sinfuller he is, the more neede to draw neere to his Saviour: as a man that shivers of an Ague creepes nearer and nearer to the fire. You know our Saviours gracious call, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you.* Now (as *Saint Bernard* saith,) every Christian is *Animal oneriferum,* a burden-bearing creature; not a Christian upon earth but hath some crosse or other to clogge him, some corruption or other to burthen him at times, and lies heavy upon his heart; what then is to be done? Shall hee lye downe like *Iffachar*, and couch betweene his burthen? Shall hee be disheartened and discouraged from resorting and approaching to God? God forbid; let him in Gods name come to

Iesus

Iesus Christ that cals him, with teares in his eyes, with true grieue and godly sorrow in his heart, with humble confessions and prayers in his mouth; and he hath promised *in verbo seruatoris*, in the word of a Saviour, that he will release and ease him of it. One thing I must tell thee by the way, when thou prayest to Christ for ease, thou must promise him obedience and service; as the Israelites did to *Rheboam*, 1 Reg. 12. *Ease us of our burthen, and we will be thy servants for ever.* Thus doe, and then let thy burthen be never so great, thy corruptions never so many, thy passions never so strong; Hee that could calme the sea, can calme thy sorrowes, and speake peace unto thy soule in the midst of all thy troubles, and therefore, if at any time thy passions be stirred, and thy heart disquieted within thee; know of a surety, that, there is some *Ionah* that hath raised this storme, some sinne or other that hath caused this trouble to thy soule; then fall to thy prayers (as *Eliab* did) and give God no rest, till God hath given rest to thy soule. *Eliab was a man subject to passions, and he prayed.*

It followes, How did he pray? My Text saith, *he prayed earnestly*, in the Originall it is, *προσευχόμενος μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρέφους*. In praying he prayed, or, he prayed a prayer, we translate it, *He prayed earnestly*, and it is to very good purpose; for it implies thus much: that no prayer is a prayer, indeede, but an earnest prayer. Cold and carelesse prayers, counterfeite and superstitious prayers, they be but *res nihili*, in Gods account no prayers at all. I will give you an instance, *Act. 9. 11.* When *Paul* was converted and stricken with

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blind.

blindnesse, Almighty God sent *Ananias* to him to lay his hands upon him, and to recover him of his sight; now least he should mistake the man, and lay his hands upon a wrong party, God gives him this private token to know him by, *for behold he prayeth*. Now let mee demand; doe you thinke that Saint *Paul* never prayed to God till that time? or doe you imagine that was the first prayer that ever Saint *Paul* made? It is the first wee reade of; but doe you thinke hee never prayed before? I beleeve he did many a time and oft; and I will give you my reason: Saint *Paul* (you know) was a Pharisee, one of the strictest and devoutest of all the Sect (as hee testifies of himselfe) and the Pharisees, you know, were altogether given to long praying; it was their glory and their gaine too, that they could make long prayers in every place, in the open streetes, in widowes houses; and no doubt but Saint *Paul* had as excellent a faculty that way, and could pray as long and as largely as the best of them all: but see the issue: Almighty God, who stiles himselfe the hearer of prayers, gave no eare, tooke no notice of all his formall, Pharisacall, hypocriticall prayers, which he had made in former times; till hee came to this humble, this earnest, this heart-breaking prayer; And now (saith God) Behold he prayeth; he never prayed indeed, till now: for as *Philo* saith well; God doth not *numerare*, but *ponderare*, not *number our prayers*, but *weigh them*; if he finde them cordiall, if hee finde them hearty, that they have some substance, and some weight in them, then he records and registers and sets them downe in that booke

booke of remembrance which the Prophet speaks of, *Mal.* 3. 16. If otherwise, they be dull and heartlesse, lazy and spiritlesse, God doth by them as he doth by our finnes of ignorance, *Act.* 17. 30. *imeiden* winke at them, passe by, and take no notice of them; let no man therefore deceive himselfe to thinke that all kinde of praying speedes alike, for no prayer is a prayer in Gods account, but an earnest prayer. *Elijah* prayed a prayer, because he prayed earnestly.

Furthermore, it is worth your noting, to see the constant disposition of this holy man. *Elijah* was well knowne to bee a hot spirited man in all his actions, exceeding zealous and earnest in all his reprehensions, both of the King, and of the people. Now here you may observe the equability, the evennesse of *Elijahs* zeale; as he was earnest in his reprehensions, so he was as earnest in his devotions; and as zealous in his prayers, as he was in his anger. There is many a man hot and fiery in his anger, but cold and luke-warme in prayers; such zeale is never right. *Gal.* 4. 18. *It is good to be alwayes earnest in a good thing.* *ἡνῶς*, is the word to be hot and fiery, and zealously affected in one good thing as well as another, in devotion, as well as reprehension, in prayer, as well as in anger. When a mans zeale is equable (like *Elijahs*) then it is right and pleasing to God.

As Physitians judge of the state of a mans body, *Vniversalia salutaria, particularia ex morbo*; as thus: if a man be hot in one part and cold in another; if the palmes of his hands burne, and the soles of his feet be key-cold, then all is not right; but if he be of an

indifferent equall heate all over, that held a good signe of good health in the body. By the like rule judge thou of the state of thy soule, if thy zeale be equable and uniforme both in prayer and in anger, it is a good signe of grace and sanctification in thy heart; but if it vary and differ, that there is too much heate in the one, too little in the other, all is not well within. It was the reason which old Father *Latimer* gave, why men in these dayes do not prevaile with God in their prayers, as *Eliab* and such others had done in former times, *Deest ignis* (saith he) *deest ignis, There lackes fire, there lackes fire*; his meaning is, our prayers want that zeale, that heate, that earnestnesse, which they put into theirs. For as incense without fire yeelds no smell, no more doth prayer without zeale and earnestnesse; and Honey is no Honey, if it have lost its sweetnesse; and Vinegar is no Vinegar, if it have lost its sharpenesse, so Prayer is no Prayer, if it bee voide of earnestnesse. *Eliab* prayed indeede, because hee prayed earnestly.

Now I come to the subject, and matter of his Prayer which (I told you) was first for a judgement, and then for a blessing, first for a drought, and then for raine, as it followeth. *Hee prayed earnestly that it might not raine, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three yeares and sixe moneths.* Here are two weighty points to be considered. 1. What should moove *Eliab* to pray for a judgement. 2. Why he made choise to pray for this kinde of judgement, of drought and dearth, rather then for any other. I will tell you my opinion of both.

1. Vpon what ground, or by what warrant did *Elijah* pray for a judgement. *Saint Paul* (in my conceit) seemes to taxe him for it, *Rom. 11. 2.* and he brings it in with a *notandum*, wote ye not (i.) doe ye not marke and observe what the Scripture saith of *Elijah*, how he made intercession to God against *Israel*. Good men in former times were wont to make intercession to God For the people, not Against them: *Abraham* prayed for the wicked *Sodomites*, *Jeremy* prayed for the idolatrous *Israelites*, till God forbade him, and gave him a countermand, *Pray no more for this people, for I will not heare thee, Ier. 11. 14.* The Husbandman in the Parable entreates his Master for the unfruitfull tree, that he would spare it and not cut it downe, and doth *Elijah* differ from all the rest, and bend his prayers against the people, and pray for the vexation and undoing of his Country? How could this stand with that good Religion, and that good affection which so holy a man should beare towards the people of God? Answer. Three things there are (in my weake judgement) that may seeme to warrant and beare out *Elijah* in praying for a judgement.

1. *Autoritas Prophetica*, Prophets might doe more then ordinary persons, and *Elijah* had the spirit of Prophecie, and knew by revelation from God, that such a judgement was a coming, therefore he might the more warrantably and unoffensively frame his desires to Gods appointments, and fit his prayers to Gods purposes. Thus must we conceive of those bitter execrations and imprecations where-with *David* did so often in the Psalmes curse and

banne his enemies, [*Let their Table be their snare, let their children be vagabondes and begge their bread, &c.*] A man would thinke it could not stand with the piety and charity of a godly man, to wish such wicked events, such uncharitable wishes to proceed out of his mouth : but onely that we know, he was a Prophet of God, and did it *per afflatum divinum*, by the direction and inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; he knew by the spirit of Prophecie, they were such as were accursed of God, being Gods enemies as well as his, and therefore might the more warrantably and safely doe it. It is not for us to use *Dauids* curses, unlesse we had *Dauids* spirit. *David* and *Eliab* had that gift which the Apostle calls *δανσιον π. ευαγγελου* the discerning spirits ; they knew by instinct from heaven, who were blessed and who were cursed of God. It is not so with us, God hath hid those secrets from our eyes, and therefore it is our part and duty to pray in love and charity, *That God would have mercy upon all men.*

But what use then are we to make of those curses in the Psalmes that are read so often to us ? Answer, Thus we may doe, we may apply them to the enemies of the Church, that seeke the ruine of the true Religion, and professe an open enmity to the Gospel and faith of Iesus Christ (Who is God blessed for ever) we may safely take our Saviours part, and curse all those that are enemies to him : [*So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord, Iud. 5. 31.*] But for our owne enemies, that have done us some private wrong, or bare us some secret grudge, to curse them and ban them in this kinde (as the usual manner of some is)

it is both unwarrantable, uncharitable, and ungodly. But the best and safest use, that we can make of those curses, is to appropriate and apply them to our selves; to acknowledge and adjudge our selves worthy to undergoe all those deadly evils, and that God may justly doe so; and more than so unto us, if hee should deale with us according to our sinnes; by this meanes we shall save God a labour, and our selves a paine. For as on the contrary, to blesse our selves is the way to make God curse us, *Dent. 29. 20. Hee that blesseth himselfe when hee heareth the words of these curses, saying, I shall have peace though I walke in the imagination of my owne heart, adding drunkennesse to thirst. (marke what followes) The Lord will be revenged upon the soule of such a one, his anger and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this booke shall light upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven.* This a man gets by blessing of himselfe: whereas if thou wouldst be blest of God, I doe not say, that thou shouldst curse thy selfe (farre be it from any servant of Christ so to doe) but this I would advise thee to doe, even with a sorrowfull and a sad heart, to say *Amento* all the curses in the Booke of God, to acknowledge and confesse that thou hast justly deserved, and that it is Gods onely mercy that thou hast escaped them. So much for the first reason that may warrant *Eliabs* prayer; the next may be this.

2. *Convenientia temporis*, the fitnesse and order of time when this was done, it was done in the time of the Law, which was used to such judgements, they

they were then accustomed to more terrible wonders, than are now sutable to the sweete and saving time of the Gospel; observe the wonders that *Moses* wrought in *Egypt*, what terrible, what hurtfull, what mischievous wonders they were, he turned all their water into blood, all their dust into Lice, and spoyled all the fruits of the earth, and undid the whole Land. What a dreadfull wonder was that of *Elisha*, *2 Reg. 2.* when he cursed the children of *Bethel*, that mocked him for his baldnesse: One would have thought that a little discipline, a little correction, or sending to their Parents or Masters, would have sufficed, and beene a sufficient revenge for waggish unhappy boyes, that did not know their duty to a man of God: but hee lookes upon them with a direfull countenance, and *cursed and banned them in the name of the Lord*, and immediately *two Shee-beares came out of the Wood, and tare two and forty of them in pieces*: what a horrible, what a terrible, what a mischievous wonder was this? Of the same kind was that of *Elijah*, *2 Reg. 1.* When the Captaine came with authority, to bid him come downe, and come before the King; he might have answered, I cannot come, or the Lord appointed me some other way to goe, &c. but the next word we heare, is a word of Iudgement and Vengeance, *If I be a man of God, let fire come downe from heaven, and consume thee, and thy company*: and so it did both them, and the rest that came after on the same message. Such wonders as these were usuall in the time of the Law. But now looke to the Miracles and Wonders of our Saviour in the Gospel, and you shall

shall finde them to be of another nature, all of goodnesse and mercy, all mercifull, all beneficiall, all healing Miracles, no way hurtfull or destructive of any mans life. We read of many a mans life that he saved, many that hee recalled and restored, none that he destroyed, no not one: being so reviled as he was, so persecuted, so laid for, so betrayed, apprehended, condemned and crucified; yet what one man did our Saviour strike dead for all these haynous indignities? Nay, he was so farre from revenge, that he prayed for their lives that sought and wrought his death.

The most terrible wonders that ever our Saviour did, were but two, and those no wayes prejudiciousto the person or life of any man, woman, or childe. The one was his *cursing* and blasting of the *barren Figge-tree*; and this was but symbolically, not done in any spleene to the poore tree; but onely to shew his indignation against all unfruitfull profession; when men make an outward shew of piety to God; but when the poore and hungry come to them (as Christ came to that Figge-tree) hoping to pull some fruite of charity and mercy from them, there is nothing to be found but leaves, good words perhaps, and that is all: beleeeve it, such men are nigh unto cursing, and it is Gods infinite mercy, if he doe not blast their estate (as Christ did the Fig-tree) that it shall never prosper to them nor theirs. The other wonder of Christ that did any hurt, was that, *Matth. 8. The drowning of the Swine*, and yet that was the devils doing, Christ onely gave way to these evill spirits (which seeke the destruction of
I man

man and beast) to carry them headlong into the sea (as they would carry us too, but that God above, who styles himselfe *The preserver of men*, is pleased in mercy to keepe out of their clutches;) and this was symbollicall too, to let us understand how God hates all those that are of a *swinish disposition*; that is, all drunken sots, that like swine, have neither wit nor grace to moderate themselves in the use of Gods creatures; and all lazy beasts that minde nothing but their bellies, (as you know) a Swine is one of the laziest creatures that a man can keepe, it doth him no worke, nor service at all; or lastly, All hoggish worldlings, and miserable muckewormes of the earth, that never doe good till they come to dye: let all such tremble and feare, and call to God for mercy, least in his just judgement he deliver their soules into the hands of those hellish Fiends to carry them headlong (as they did the Swine) *into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for evermore, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

These are the two severest wonders that ever our Saviour did, or suffered to be done; as for all the rest (looke into the Stories of the Gospell, which are the Acts and Monuments of Iesus Christ) you shall finde to be all gracious, all beneficiall, all healing and saving wonders. Never any man came to him for sight, that went away blind; never any came to him for hearing, that went away deafe; never any came to him for health, that went away sicke. In a word, you shall never finde that ever any man or woman came to our Saviour for any helpe
or

or mercy, that ever went away confounded or disappointed of their hopes. Now beloved, Christ is the same Iesus still, that then hee was: *Caelum non animum* (as wee say) though hee have changed his place, he hath not changed his nature, but is still as favourable, as indulgent to mankind as ever he was, if we doe but as truely seeke unto him for our soules health, as they did for their bodies.

So you see the nature of these wonders is altered from that they were in *Eliab's* times: the severity of the Law suites not with the lenity of the Gospell; and wee must now imitate our Saviour in workes of mercy, and not follow *Eliab* in prayers for judgement. Wee see, *Luke 9. 54.* When the Disciples fingers itched to be revenged on the *Samaritans* for their base discourtesie in not entertaining our Saviour; *Master,* (saith they) *wilt thou that we command fire from Heaven, and consume them, as Eliab did?* Wee have a president for it, it is a booke case, *Eliab* did so, let us doe the like, these men deserve it, as bad or worse than they with whom *Eliab* had to doe: *No,* (saith our Saviour, the case is altered) *ye know not of what spirit ye are;* the spirit of the Law required severity, the spirit of the Gospell requires meekenesse and mercy. Farre is it from the good Spirit of Christ and of God, to stire up any mans heart to private revenge; not an Eagle, but a Dove was the shape wherein that holy and healthfull Spirit made choise to appeare. Let us therefore all that are called Christians, follow no other president, but our Saviour Christ; whose onely lesson that ever he set us to learne of him, was this, to be humble and

meeke, and so doing we shall find *Requiem animabus*,
rest and peace to our owne soules.

The third and last reason that may warrant *Eliab*
 in praying for a judgement, was,

3. *Necessitas rei, the necessity of the thing it selfe,*
 that holy Prophet had spent his strength in vaine,
 Sermon upon Sermon, warning upon warning,
 threatning upon threatning; and when he saw that
 nothing would worke them to goodnesse, then he
 prayes for a judgement; not in a vindictive way to
 be revenged upon them, but as a desperate remedy,
 knowing that that or nothing would bring them to
 good, as it is said, *2 Chron. ult.* God sent his Pro-
 phets, *rising early and sending them,* and used all gen-
 tle meanes to reclaime them, *till there was no remedy,*
 then he sent destruction. In this sence, if a man have
 a child or a friend, or any one that he wisheth well
 to his soule; if he be growne to that passe, so hard-
 ned in sinne, that no perswasions, no warnings, no
 threatnings will worke upon him; I am perswa-
 ded, it were neither uncharitable, nor displeasing to
 God, if a man should pray, Lord smite him, cor-
 rect him, lay some medicinall, some healing pu-
 nishment upon him, that hee may see the errour
 of his wayes, and may returne and repent, and so be
 saved.

Vpon these and the like grounds, I suppose *Eliab*
 might with a safe conscience pray for a judgement:
 but then the next question is, Why he should make
 choise to pray for this kind of judgement, of drought
 and dearth, for want of raine; rather then any other.
 I will tell you what I thinke the reasons may be.

1. Because it was an uncontrollable, a convincing judgement; if *Eliab* should have brought any earthly or visible judgement, as Sword or Pestilence, &c. they would have imputed it presently to some secondary meanes and causes; now this was a heavenly an invisible judgement, the stoppage of the clouds, the detaining of Raine, and the burning and scorching of the Sunne; was a judgement from heaven, and such as they must needs confesse to be *Digitus, the finger of God*, not *Aliquid humani*, no handy worke of any mortall man. For this was the fallacy which the Scribes and Pharisees put upon our Saviour *Math. 16. 1.* When they had seene all the miracles and wonders of Christ, how he cured the sicke, &c. they conceited that these things might be done by slight of hand, by Art of Magicke, by *Beelzebub*, or by Conjuratiō, &c. but (say they) *Shew us a signe from heaven; and then we will beleewe.* They knew that a Magician or a devill might doe much upon earth, but he could doe nothing in heaven; therefore (say they) *shew us a signe from Heaven, and we will beleewe.* So here to prevent all misconceites, *Elias* prayed and procures a judgement from heaven; and that a convincing a cutting judgement; for you must know that the people at that time left off to worship the true God, and fell to worship *Baall*, the Sunne, the Moone, and all the Hoast of Heaven; trusting no doubt that these gods of theirs, would by their influence somoysten and fatten the earth, that they should not need to be beholding to God for any raine: now (quoth *Eliab*) here is a judgement to try yours gods: withall, goe

to the gods that ye have served, let them helpe now or never, if they can doe any thing, they can send a shewre of rayne, if not, why doe ye serve them? I say it was a convincing judgement. *Eliab* did it on purpose, to let them see the vilenesse of their Idolatry, what base, what impotent, what unworthy gods they served, that could not helpe their elements to a droppe of rayne. In like manner, whatsoever a man makes his god, besides the true one; I meane, puts his trust in, for helpe in time of neede; shall at length so deceive him, and so befoole him, that hee shall bee forced to confesse, as these people did in the end; *The Lord he is God, The Lord hee is God.*

2. Because it was a just and a fitting punishment; this people were guilty of spirituall barrennesse, and God plagued them with temporall barrennesse. No Nation under heaven was so husbanded, and manured of God, so watered with the dewes of heaven, I meane, with the meanes of grace and salvation, as they were, and yet none more unfruitfull in every good worke: Now therefore *Eliab* fits them with a judgement surable and agreeable to their sinne: he prayes to God that it might not raine, that so their lands might be answerable to their lives, and their soyles become as barren as their soules. Thus it pleaseth God many times to pay men in their owne cooyne, to come home to them in their owne kinde, and to fit his punishments according to their finnes. That as they that sinne in their goods, by misgetting, miskeeping, and mispending them, are many times punished in their goods, by losses, and crosses,

by

by fire, by water, &c. And as they that sinne in their children, by misloving, or misnurturing them, are oft times punished in their children, as *David* was in *Absalom* and *Adonijah*; so they that sinne in their lands: it is just with God to punish them in their lands: *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 21. 4.* that the plowing of a wicked man is sinne, That is strange; the husbandry and tillage of the ground is generally held to be one of the most honest, the most innocent, the most harmlesse callings in the world; and so it is of it selfe; and yet wee see, when a wicked man takes the plow in hand; when a man goes to his plow with an ill minde, and an ill conscience, his very plowing addesse to his finnes. And it is just with God, that that land which is plowed sinfully, should thrive accordingly, and become as bad and as barren as the owner. *A fruitfull land doth God make barren, for the wickednesse of them that dwell therein.*

3. Because it was a sensible, and a palpable judgement. As God Almighty told *Cain*, *Gen. 4. 7.* that hee should be cursed from the earth. The Lord knew that *Cain* cared not to be cursed from heaven, and to be banished from the presence of God, and branded for a Reprobate; but to be cursed from the earth, to be cursed in earthly things (hee being a tiller of the earth) that would goe nearest to his heart of any judgement. Even such is the disposition of every man of the earth (as *David* testifies earthly minded men) they doe not value nor care to be cursed from heaven, to be excommunicated out of the favour of God, and out of the blessed company of all faithfull people (which censure of excommunication

nication if it be rightly carryed with a *Clave non t-*
rante (as the Schoolemen speake) when there is no
 error committed in the use of the keyes, is one of
 the greatest punishments under heaven.) But carnall
 men are not sensible of this, and therefore God will
 punish them in that wherein they are sensible, in
 their wives and children, in their corne and cattell,
 &c. in such things as are neereft and dearest to them:
 as when *David* slung his stone at *Goliath*, if hee had
 stricke him upon any part of his harnesse, hee had
 never felt the blow, but striking him (as hee did) in
 the forehead, which was naked and tender, that
 sunke him presently; so it is with carnall men, for
 spirituall judgements, they are harnessed, their hearts
 are hardned, their consciences are seared, they have
 (as the Apostle speakes) *παραναρησις*, a horny hoofe
 (as it were) growne over their hearts, that makes
 them insensible of any spirituall blow that can light
 upon them. Therefore Almighty God, knowing in
 what part they lie naked, in what kinde they are ten-
 derly affected, namely, in their affection to earthly
 things, strikes them there, plagues them in that,
 and that sinkes them like *Nabal*, whose heart dyed
 within him like a stone. As we see in *Exodus*, how
Pharaoh and the *Egyptians* hardned their heart, and
 out stood all the plagues of *Egypt*, till God plagued
 them in their children, and that broke their hearts.
 So beleewe it, they that care not for spirituall pu-
 nishments (for the losse of Gods favour, the losse of
 heaven, the losse and perill of their owne soules)
 God will finde a time to punish them in that which
 they doe and shall care for, in their corne, in their
 substance,

substance, in that which is neereſt and deareſt to them: As he did theſe *Iſraelies* here, becauſe they were not ſenſible of the want of grace. God puniſht them with that would make them ſenſible, with the want of raine; that when they had plowed and ſowne their land, and beſtowed all their care and coſt, all ſhould be in vaine, for want of moiſture to reſreſh the earth. Theſe or the like reaſons (I ſuppoſe) might moove *Eliab* to pray and procure this kinde of judgement.

By the way, if any man deſire to know the reaſon, why God is not thus marveilous in the Miniſters of the Goſpell, as hee was in *Eliab*, and thoſe other Prophets of the Law; why wee that are his Evangelicall Prophets cannot doe ſuch wonders in our dayes, as they did in theirs? Anſwer, though that ſame *donum miraculorum*, the gift of Miracles be ceaſed in the Church, now that the Goſpell hath taken roote: as Husbandmen when they tranſplant a tree, at firſt, they ſet props and ſtaves to ſhore it up, but after it hath taken root, they take away the ſtaves and let it grow by the ordinary influence of the heavens;) I ſay though the gift of working wonders be ceaſed, yet miracles & wonders in another kind never ceaſe, but are wrought daily by the Preachers of the Goſpell. For you muſt know that the miracles under the Goſpell are of a differing nature from the miracles under the Law: thoſe were *ocularia miracula* (as I may fitly call them) *eye-miracles*, that were viſible and outwardly apparent to be ſcene; but theſe are *Auricularia miracula*, *Eare-miracles*, ſecret and inviſible, wrought in the heart by the

Word and Spirit of God, entring in at the eare, and going downe into the soule. Though wee cannot command, or forbid the raine to water the earth, as *Elish* did; if we can water and mollifie the earthen hearts of men with the supernaturall raine of heavenly Doctrine, and make a dry and barren soule beare fruit to God; is not this as great a wonder as the other? Though we cannot cause nor command the thunder (as *Samuel* did) to terrifie the people for their finnes; yet God hath his *Boanerges*, his sons of thunder still, that by ratling from heaven the terrible judgements of God against sinne and sinners, are able to make the stoutest and the proudest heart upon earth, even tremble and quake, and fall downe before the presence of God; and is not this as great a miracle as that of *Samuel*, to bring an unhumbléd sinner upon his knees, and make glad to cry God mercy for his finnes? In a word, though we cannot cast out devils out of mens bodies, as the disciples of Christ could doe; if wee can cast the devill out of mens soules, by the powerfull Gospell of Iesus Christ; is it not as great a wonder? Beleeve it brethren, the conversion of a sinner to God, and bringing of a soule to heaven, is absolutely without comparifon the greatest miracle, the greatest wonder in the world. And these be the miracles wherewith it pleaseth God to grace the Ministers of the Gospell; therefore ye observe, that the Collect for Ministers, runs thus, *Almighty God which only werkest great marvels, &c.* When a soule is sicke to the death, with a surfeit of sinne, is recovered and revived againe by that same healthfull spirit of grace, which

which God together with his Word doth breathe into the soule, it is so great a marvell, so rare a wonder, that the Angels of heaven rejoyce to see it.

I have held you over-long in the former part of *Eliahs* prayer, which brought the judgement: heare now in a word or two, the Reverſing of the judgement, and I have done. [*And hee prayed againe, and the heavens gave raine, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*] It well becomes the Prophets of God to be mercifull; Good *Eliab* had not the heart to hold the people too long under a judgement, when hee ſaw he had done enough to humble them, he deſires God to reverſe the judgement. As it is obſerved of the good Angels in the old and new Teſtament, when they appeared to any, either man, or woman; their method and manner was this, *Primo terrent, deinde laſificant*, they firſt terrified them, and put them into feare, then preſently comforted them, and put them out of feare. Thus did *Eliab* with this people; thus did *Mofes* with *Pharaoh*, that good man had not the heart to hold wicked *Pharaoh* alway under a judgement, but upon the leaſt entreaty made ſuite to God to reverſe it. So dealt the Prophet with *Ieroboam*, *1 Reg. 13. 6.* when hee had ſmitten him with a judgement, and had him at the advantage, that his hand was withered, *Ieroboam* was glad to ſubmit and ſay, *Intreate now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be reſtored me*: The man of God had not the heart to deny him, but immediately, beſought the Lord, and the Kings hand was reſtored, and became as it was before. When a judgement comes, then Pro-

phets are in season. *Abraham* is better than a King in this case, *Gen.* 20. 7. *Restore the man his owne, for he is a Prophet, and hee shall pray for thee; and ver.* 27. *Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech, &c.* Goe to my servant *Iob* (saith God to his friends, *Iob* 42. 8.) and my servant *Iob* shall pray for you, for him will I accept. So *Act.* 8. 24. When *Peter* had denounced a curse on *Simon Magus*, he was glad to crouch and cry unto him, *Oh pray yee to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon mee.* Thus yee see that judgements and plagues will bring Prophets into request: men commonly deale with their Ministers, as boyes doe by Walnut-trees, and other fruit-trees, in faire weather throw cudgels at us, in foule runne to us for shelter. In the dayes of peace and prosperity wee are past over as superfluous creatures, of whom there is little use, and lesse neede: but when the wrath of God falls on the naked soule, when the conscience is wounded within, and body pained without, then the Minister is thought on. I say no more, if you desire their prayers, and that God should heare them praying for you in your extremity, doe not flight them, doe not wrong them in prosperity. Remember how *Ahab* and all *Israel* were glad to be beholden to *Elijah* to reverse their judgement; and you do not know how soone the case may be your owne: therefore as you love your soules, love those that have charge of them.

And he prayed againe, &c. When I looke into the Story, *1 Reg.* 18. I can finde no direct prayer that *Elijah* made for raine. But I finde there a twofold prayer

prayer that he made. 1. A vertuall. 2. A formall prayer.

1. A Vertuall prayer, not for raine, but for their conversion. *Ob Lord, (saith Eliab) bring backe, or bring home the heart of this people unto thee; vers. 73.* and this includes all other prayers that can be made: A prayer for conversion is a prayer for every thing, *Ier. 31. 18.* When *Ephraim* prayes for conversion, *Turne thou me, and I shall be turned: (saith God) I will surely have mercy upon him &c.* Such is the goodnesse of God, that he will with-hold no good thing, (be it raine, be it plenty, be it any thing that is good for them) from them that are converted, and brought home by true repentance to him. Therefore if thou standest in need of any temporall mercy, pray first for conversion, and all other good things shall be super-added and throwne in unto thee; or if thou prayest for any child, or for any friend to doe him good indeed, pray for his conversion, and thou prayest for every thing, that one prayer is *instar omnium, instead of all the rest.* If he be in an ill way, desire God to bring him backe, and for future things take no care.

2. A formall prayer, when he saw that the people were truly humbled, and that their hearts were indeed brought home to God, insomuch that they cryed out, with an ingemination, *The Lord hee is God, the Lord hee is God,* then he buckles his head betweene his knees (to shew the humble prostration of his soule) and fals a praying to God for raine. After humiliation any prayer comes in season, *Esay* 1. *Wash ye, make ye cleane, put away the evill of your*

doings, &c. And now come (saith God) and wee will reason together, now let us parle, now let us confesse, now pray and I will heare you. *Iud. 10. 17.* When the *Israelites* put away their strange gods, and turned themselves to the true God by sincere repentance and reformation; the Text saith, *His soule was grieved for the misery of Israel*: thus the onely way to ease our owne soules of grieve, or to be rid of any grievous judgement, is to *grieve the soule of God*, that is, to humble our selves before him, to pray and seeke his face, and to turne from our wicked wayes, and God will be even grieved with himselfe that ever he punished, plagued, and put us to grieve; and he will returne (as he saith) and have mercy on us, and will do us good after he hath done us hurt. Here then (in a word) is the ready way to prevaile with God, either for raine, or for faire weather, or for any temporall blessing whatsoever, to doe as *Elijah* did, buckle our very heads betweene our knees, I meane, prostrate our selves before the face of God, in the humblest, in the lowliest, in the most dejected manner that we can device, and if any meanes under heaven will fetch downe mercy from heaven, that will doe it. *Elijah* prayed againe, and the heavens gave raine, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Now to God the Father, God the Sonne, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed and given, all honour and glory be done and performed all service and duty, from this time forth for evermore, Amen.

F J N J S.